

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-02 USIA-15 SAB-02 SNM-05 L-03  
SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 HA-05 H-02 DEAE-00 /071 W  
-----074548 171805Z /41/66  
R 161745Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5713  
INFO PANCANAL  
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN  
USCINCSO FOR J-2AND PAO  
PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, PN  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

1-PANAMA CITY.--NEGATIVE REACTION TO SENATE INVESTIGATION OF  
DRUG CHARGES AGAINST TORRIJOS AND FAMILY PICKED UP AFTERNOON  
OF FEBRUARY 15 AND MORNING FEBRUARY 16 WITH FIVE OPINION COLUMNS  
VOICING BITTER OPPOSITION. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED BUT GENERALLY  
MODERATE LA REPUBLICA FEBRUARY 15 IN ITS LEAD EDIT, "ANOTHER  
INFAMOUS ACT," CHARGES THAT THE SENATORS HAVE ASSUMED "FUNCTIONS  
OF INQUISITORS IN THE CASE OF PANAMA, FUNCTIONS THAT OFFEND THE  
DIGNITY OF OUR NATION... THE SAME THING HAPPENDED DURING THE  
NEGOTIATION OF THE REMON-EISENHOWER TREATY. THEN AS NOW THE  
ACCUSATIONS WERE THE SAME. THEN AS NOW MEMBERS OF PRESIDENT  
REMON'S INTIMATE FAMILY WERE ACCUSED OF HAVING COMMITTED CRIMES...  
THEN AS NOW THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND JUSTICE DENIED THE  
CHARGES."

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2-LA REPUBLICA CONCLUDES: "THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE AND THE CHIEF OF  
GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN PATIENT WITH THIS CHAIN OF HUMILIATING  
ACTIVITIES. BUT IT IS TIME TO CALL A HALT TO THE SLANDER, THE  
OUTRAGE AND THE INFAMOUY TRAUMA. WE REPEAT THAT WE PANAMANIAN  
HAVE BEEN PATIENT. WE PUT UP WITH THE AVALANCHE OF SENATORS  
THAT TRAVELED AROUND OUR COUNTRY TO INVESTIGATE EVERYTHING; TO  
INSINUATE WHAT WE SHOULD OR WHAT WE SHOULDN'T DO. ALL OF THAT

WAS TOLERATED AND THEY LEFT, POSSIBLY UNDER THE MISTAKEN IMPRESSION THAT THEY COULD GO EVEN FURTHER. THAT IS HOW THE CHARGES AGAINST THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT AROSE. IF ACCEPTING THY INFAMY IS AN ADDITIONAL PRICE WE HAVE TO PAY FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATIES, IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO TAKE ANOTHER ROAD TO REACH THE GOAL OF OUR STRUGGLE FOR RECOVERY OF WHAT IS LEGITIMATELY OURS."

3-WRITING ON THE OP-ED PAGE OF LA REPUBLICA FEBRUARY 15, POPULAR COLUMNIST MARIO AUGUSTO RODRIGUEZ ENTITLED HIS COLUMN, "SENATORIAL INSOLENCIE." RODRIGUEZ SAYS THAT HE NEVER HAS AGREED WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY BECAUSE THE U.S. IS NOT COMPETENT TO SET ITSELF UP AS JUDGE AND JURY AND MEDDLE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS, "BUT THE INSOLENCIE OF THE SENATE HAS GONE TOO FAR WHEN IT DECIDES TO HOLD A 'SECRET SESSION'" TO INVESTIGATE UNFOUNDED CALUMNIES THAT ENEMIES OF OUR NATIONAL DIGNITY HAVE BEEN SPREADING FOR A LONG TIME WITH REGARD TO THE DRUG TRAFFIC IN PANAMA."

4-RODRIGUEZ CONTINUES: "IT WOULD BE INADMISSABLE IF SUCH AN INVESTIGATION DEALT WITH JUST ANY PANAMANIAN CITIZEN BUT IT IS EVEN MORE OFFENSIVE AND INSULTING WHEN IT IS AIMED AT THE PERSON OF THE CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT AND MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT TEAM AND HIS FAMILY. IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO OUR HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVES TO INVESTIGATE THE CHARGES AGAINST A SON OF PRESIDENT CARTER WHO WAS ACCUSED BY THE ARMED FORCES OF SMOKING MARIJUANA, NOR WHAT THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESIDENT'S BROTHER DRINKS OR SMOKES...THESE ARE AFFAIRS OF MR. CARTER HIS FAMILY AND HIS NATION JUST AS THOSE THINGS REFERRING TO THE LIFE OF OUR GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ARE OUR AFFAIRS."

5-" I THINK THAT SOME OF THE AMERICAN LEADERS ARE OVERELY IMPRESSED WITH THE SUPPOSED AUTHORITY OF THEIR NATION. THAT IS WHAT LEADS THEM TO LOOK FOR THE SLIVER IN OTHERS' EYES INSTEAD OF INSPECTING THE LOG IN THEIR OWN. MANY OF THEM SEEM NOT TO BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE TIME WHEN YANKEE TROOPS COULD ARBITRARILY ENTER ANYWHERE TO IMPOSE THEIR WILL AND SATIATE THEIR AMBITIONS AT THE COST OF OTHERS' MISERY IS LONG BEHIND US. IN OUR CASE WE HAVE PUT UP WITH TOO MUCH. OUR AUTHORITIES HAVE SPENT MUCH TIME, ENERGY AND RESOURCES IN DETAINING TENS OF DRUG TRAFFICERS--MANY OF THEM AMERICAN--ON THEIR WAY TO THE JUICY U.S. MARKET. AND THE GRATITUDE WE RECEIVE FOR PROTECTING THEIR YOUTH..IS AN INSOLENT INVESTIGATION THAT TRIES TO DENIGRATE NOT ONLY THE NAME OF OUR LEADERS BUT, AND ABOVE ALL, THE DIGNITY AND HONOR OF THE PANAMANIAN NATION."

6-THE TRUE CAUSE OF THE DRUG TRAFFIC, CONCLUDES RODRIGUEZ, IS "A LAW ENFORCEMENT AND LEGAL SYSTEM THAT OPENLY PROTECTS

DRUG TRAFFICERS...THAT IS WHAT THE SENATORS SHOULD INVESTIGATE  
INSTEAD OF USING SUBTERFUGE TO TRY TO OBSTRUCT THE RECOGNITION  
OF THE FEW RIGHTS THAT THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATIES MEAN TO OUR  
NATION."

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-02 USIA-15 SAB-02 SNM-05 L-03  
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R 161745Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5714  
INFO PANCANAL  
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7-CAMILO O. PEREZ, DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA LAW SCHOOL  
AND HEAD OF THE LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL, IN HIS  
DAILY "BONA FIDE" COLUMN IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED CRITICA,  
COMPLAINS THAT FOR THE SENATE  
TO DEBATE PANAMANIAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS IN SECRET IS "THE  
LAST STRAW." PEREZ IN A COLUMN ENTITLED "WITH ARMS HELD  
ERECT" ASKS ALL PANAMANIAN TO JOIN HIM IN THE STREETS FEBRUARY 21  
WITH THEIR ARMS RAISED IN DEFIANCE OF THE U.S. SENATE. AFTER  
QUESTIONING THE SENATE'S AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE THE DRUG  
CHARGES, PEREZ CONCLUDES: "...EVERY AWARE PANAMANIAN WILL  
KNOW HOW TO RESPOND TO THE INTERFERENCE IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
WITH A GOOD SOCIAL, COLLECTIVE, CRUCIAL AND FINAL ANSWER\*  
THOSE PANAMANIAN WHO LEND THEMSELVES TO THIS TYPE OF ARROGANCE  
WILL NOT SUCCEED. ...WHAT WE ARE ASKING IS THAT PANAMANIAN  
PROBLEMS BE DISCUSSED, CRITICIZED AND CENSURED BY US PANAMANIAN,  
WITHOUT ANY FOREIGN AGENTS HAVING TO TELL US WHAT WE MUST DO.  
THEREFORE, THE 21ST WE WILL BE IN THE STREET, STANDING UP, ASKING  
THAT EVERYBODY HALT TO DECLARE BEFORE HISTORY WITH PATRIOTIC  
PRIDE AND WITH THE DOCTRINE OF NON-INTERVENTION IN OUR HANDS."

8-LUIS RESTREPO, WRITING IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MATUTINO  
FEBRUARY 16, TERMS THE DRUG CHARGES "POLITICAL BLACKMAIL" IN A  
COLUMN ALONG THE SAME LINES AS THAT OF MARIO AUGUSTO RODRIGUEZ  
ABOVE. RESTREPO CONCLUDES: "THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE  
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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE DRUG CONTROL OFFICIALS HURRY TO DENY THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT IN THOSE ACTIVITIES. BUT THE DAMAGE IS DONE, THE INFAMY HAS BEEN SOWN IN THE HOPE THAT THE AMENDMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO IMPOSE ON THE TWO TREATIES WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. SURELY THE MOMENT HAS ARRIVED TO CALL A HALT TO THE INFAMY AND IF THE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT APPROVED THEN TO TAKE OTHER ROADS TO LIBERATION."

9-THE ENGLISH SECTION OF LA REPUBLICA FEBRUARY 15 HEADLINED A UPI JOHN VIRTURE BYLINER: U.S. MILITARY GEARS FOR WORST IN CANAL ZONE. THE LOOSELY-WRITTEN PANAMA-DATELINED STORY CARRIES THE ABOVE LEAD BUT OFFERS LITTLE TO SUPPORT IT IN THE BODY OF THE ARTICLE. FORTUNATELY FOR PANAMANIAN-CANAL ZONE RELATIONS THE UPI STORY WAS NOT FRONT-PAGED IN THE SPANISH PRESS, HOWEVER IT WAS PICKED UP IN THE "BITACORA DE LA REDACCION" OPINION COLUMN OF THE EDITORIAL PAGE OF MATUTINO FEBRUARY 16.

10-SEEING THE ALLEGED MILITARY PREPARATION IN THE ZONE AS PART OF A CONSPIRACY, THE "BITACORA" WRITER BEGINS: "THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATY DEBATE IS IN RECESS BUT THE MECHANISMS IN AND OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHICH ARE TRYING TO SABOTAGE (THE TREATY) ARE NOT...NOW THEY ARE CREATING A CLIMATE OF TENSION WITH CABLES ABOUT 'A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE CANAL ZONE'... A ROOSTER DOESN'T CROW ANY CLEARER. THEY ARE REFINED METHODS AIMED AT CAUSING REACTIONS AGAINST THE PROVOCATIONS AT THE DETERMINED MOMENT. AND THAT IS WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR, THAT SOMEONE WILL REACT, AND VIOLENTLY. THEY WILL THEN BE ABLE TO JUSTIFY THEIR DEFENDING THEMSELVES WITH 'AGGRESSION.'"

11-THE "BITACORA" COLUMN CONCLUDES: "IT IS NOT STRANGE THEN THAT THEY ARE CREATING AN ARTIFICIAL PSYCHOSIS IN THE CANAL ZONE ...TELLING THE WORLD THAT: (QUOTING FROM THE UPI STORY) 'THE

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PANAMANIAN CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS, WHO MUST WALK A TIGHTROPE BETWEEN LEFTIST STUDENT AGITATORS AND THE CONSERVATIVE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, HAS STAKED HIS POLITICAL LIFE ON THE TREATIES'. (END UPI QUOTE) "THIS IS THE KEY TO EVERYTHING.THEY WANT TO GET RID OF TORRIJOS. THEY WANT TO SHOVE THE CHIEF OF THE REVOLUTION ASIDE BECAUSE GENERAL TORRIJOS HAS KNOWN HOW TO CONDUCT HIMSELF WITH DEXTERITY, SKILL AND HONESTY, WITH THE RIGHTISTS AND THE LEFTISTS, SIMPLY BECAUSE HE IS WITH PANAMA." ITEM JORDEN

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## Message Attributes

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